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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES, INCLUDING PALESTINE

Note verbale dated 27 June 1994 from the Permanent Mission of the League of Arab States to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Centre for Human Rights

The Permanent Mission of the League of Arab States to the United Nations Office at Geneva presents its compliments to the Centre for Human Rights and has the honour to transmit to it the monthly report on Israeli practices in the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories for the month of April 1994.

The Permanent Mission of the League of Arab States wishes to express its deep concern at the deterioration of the situation of Arab civilians in the territories occupied by Israel, as described in the attached report. It requests the Centre for Human Rights to treat this report as an official document and to circulate it to members of the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-first session.

GE.94-14247 (E)

REPORT ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES IN THE MONTH OF APRIL 1994

During the month of April, the Israeli occupation authorities tightened their grip on the occupied Palestinian territories, issued further military closure orders and once again imposed the policy of blockading and isolated all the occupied territory in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

At the beginning of April, Palestinian economists assessed the value of the losses inflicted on the economy of the occupied territories during the 35-day period from the occurrence of the massacre at the Ibrahimi Shrine and the imposition of the comprehensive security cordon to the end of March at about US$ 289 million.

The Palestinian economist Abdul Fattah Abu Shukr indicated that the daily damage caused by the decline in GDP amounted to $5,300,000 in the West Bank and $1,800,000 in the Gaza Strip, thereby bringing the total losses in terms of GDP to an estimated $7,100,000 per day. He added that further losses had been inflicted on the Palestinian economy due to the fact that tens of thousands of Palestinian workers had been prevented from travelling to their places of employment in Israel and the losses suffered in the labour sector were estimated at about $1,200,000 per day, i.e. a total of about $40,800,000.

The Medical Association, health institutions and medical staff in the city of Jerusalem held the Israeli Government responsible for the damages caused by the policy of isolating the Holy City and preventing physicians and persons working in the health sector from reaching their places of employment in Jerusalem in view of the fact that more than 65 per cent of all the persons working in the health sector in the city lived in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

According to a statement issued by the authorities responsible for the health sector, the number of patients attending health facilities in the city of Jerusalem had declined by 45 per cent due to the blockade that had been imposed on the city. The statement appealed to world public opinion and international humanitarian institutions to make immediate representations to the Israeli Government with a view to:

(a) Lifting the blockade from the hospitals and securing permission for physicians and persons working in the health sector to enter the city of Jerusalem and engage in their occupations in full freedom;

(b) Putting an end to the acts of harassment and provocation by military personnel at the points of access to the city of Jerusalem;

(c) Compelling the Israeli occupation authorities to apply the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention concerning civilians living under occupation;

(d) Securing permission for all sick persons from all parts of the occupied territories to enjoy totally free access, by day and night, to the hospitals at Jerusalem.

A report issued by the International Solidarity for Human Rights organization noted the serious and large-scale repercussions that the security cordon was having on the overall living conditions of the population of the occupied territories, particularly in the wake of the massacre at the Ibrahimi Shrine. Those repercussions included:

(a) The deprivation of about 70,000 Palestinian workers employed in Israel, as well as their families, of their sole source of livelihood;

(b) The prevention of thousands of students studying in the city of Jerusalem from attending their schools, as well as the prevention of about 1,300 students from the Gaza Strip from entering Jerusalem or the West Bank to attend their universities and institutes;

(c) The inability of sick persons to travel to hospitals at Jerusalem for medical treatment;

(d) The inability of factory owners to travel to purchase their raw material requirements, as well as their inability to sell their products, which would lead to the closure of their factories and the destruction of the Palestinian economy with the consequent dismissal of workers and a further increase in unemployment;

(e) The inability of teachers working at Jerusalem to reach their places of employment, which was affecting the educational process and disrupting studies;

(f) The inability of worshippers to reach places of worship at Jerusalem;

(g) The inability of civil servants and persons employed by government departments and institutions to reach their places of employment at Jerusalem;

(h) Obstruction of the activities of bus and taxi companies, which were being prevented from obtaining the income needed to cover their operating costs;

(i) The considerable inconvenience caused to vehicle owners and passengers forced to use the Wadi al-Nar route in order to reach various parts of the West Bank.

During the month, the Israeli occupation authorities also launched a large-scale campaign of arrests among persons whom they suspected of belonging to the Islamic Hamas movement. According to sources in that movement, the number of persons who had been detained, most of whom were university professors, physicians, teachers and university students, amounted to more than 2,700. This is considered to be one of the largest Israeli campaigns against the Islamic movement since the mass arrests that preceded the deportation of 400 of the movement's members to southern Lebanon in 1992.

Sources estimated that half of the detainees were from the West Bank and the other half from the Gaza Strip. According to the same sources, at least 60 men had been arrested in the Shaikh Radhwan district of the Gaza Strip and

a further 60 at Rafah camp, while others had been arrested in other parts of the Strip. In the West Bank, about 100 persons had been arrested in the town of Hebron and others in the surrounding villages, while hundreds had been arrested in the districts of Ramallah and Nablus and their surrounding villages.

During the month, the authorities took the following new measures to restrict the freedom of the population and violate their legitimate rights:

(a) The authorities began to issue magnetic identity cards to West Bank workers employed in Israel. The issue of these cards is regarded as a violation of international law;

(b) The authorities imposed restrictions on the entry of Muslim worshippers into the Nabi Samwil mosque to the north of Jerusalem and Israeli troops established a military post on the roof of the mosque;

(c) The Israeli authorities took new measures at the site of Joseph's Tomb to the east of the town of Nablus. These measures included the construction of new roads, the demolition of rocky outcrops and the uprooting of trees, thereby indicating the authorities' intention to establish a military command post near the mosque.

The Israeli authorities are also continuing their daily encroachments on Arab land and their acts of aggression against the Arab population. From the beginning of the occupation to the end of April 1994, the Israeli authorities have confiscated a total of 3,170,469 dunums of land in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. They have also proceeded with their attempts to promote settlement and have prepared plans to encourage Jewish immigrants to settle in the 186 settlements in the West Bank and the 20 settlements in the Gaza Strip.

With regard to violations of the fundamental freedoms and rights of the population, the Israeli authorities continued to implement their inhuman policies and imposed individual and collective punishments, as illustrated by the sentences passed on 120 residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip who appeared before the military courts. The sentences ranged from imprisonment for a few months to several years, with heavy fines.

The following details concerning Israeli violations were reported in the Arabic press published in the city of Jerusalem during the month of April:

I. Confiscation of land and settlement

(a) Confiscation of land

During the month, the Israeli authorities confiscated more than 30,494 dunums of land in various districts of the West Bank. These confiscations are listed below:

380 dunums confiscated at the villages of Shu'fat and Beit Hanina in the district of Jerusalem. (Al-Nahar, 11/4/1994)

20 dunums confiscated at the village of Yatta in the district of Hebron. (Al-Quds, 21/4/1994)

64 dunums confiscated at Wadi al-Joz and Shaikh Jarrah in the district of Jerusalem. (Al-Nahar, 21/4/1994)

30,000 dunums confiscated at the village of Al-Musafir in the Yatta sub-district of Hebron on the pretext that they were military zones. (Al-Quds, 23/4/1994)

30 dunums confiscated at the village of Yasuf in the district of Nablus. (Al-Quds, 27/4/1994)

The Israeli Planning Department announced details of a scheme to widen two roads crossing land belonging to the village of Salfit in the district of Nablus, which will entail the confiscation of more than 1,000 dunums of land owned by Palestinian residents of the village. (Al-Quds, 21/4/1994)

(b) Settlement and construction of settlement roads

In spite of the Declaration of Principles agreed upon by the Palestinians and the Israelis, the authorities are manifestly seeking to change the demography and geography of the occupied territories. This is evident, in particular, from a study of the Israeli plans to Judaize the district of Jerusalem.

This policy is clearly illustrated by the settlement plans around the city of Jerusalem, which aim to link the eastern and western parts of the city and increase its proportional Jewish population at the expense of its Arab population.

One of the main schemes is the planned Highway No. 1, passing through the area of Beit Hanina and Shu'fat, which will be 3.6 km long and 36 metres wide with 30-metre verges.

The total area of land confiscated for the purpose of implementing that scheme amounts to 380 dunums and its implementation will entail the demolition of 14 buildings at Shu'fat and Beit Hanina, as well as the loss of 500 dunums bordering the highway which have been designated as green spaces on which building is prohibited.

The purpose of the construction of this highway is to complete the settlement belt on the eastern side of the city of Jerusalem and link the southern and eastern settlements to the settlements in the Jerusalem area.

The construction of this highway will constitute an indication of the commencement of the implementation of the "Eastern Gateway to Jerusalem" project, which is one of the most dangerous projects affecting the city's demography since, according to the announced plans, its implementation will be followed by intensive settlement operations.

A start was also made on the construction of the following settlement roads in April 1994:

(a) The Israeli authorities widened and paved the agricultural road situated to the east of the "Gush Katif" settlements in the southern part of the Gaza Strip, on which they also established several military check-points;

(b) A new road linking the eastern settlement of "Nisanit" to the western settlement of "Dugit" to the north of Beit Lahiya. The construction of this road will lead to the isolation of an area of 100 dunums of Palestinian-owned land which will be sandwiched between two roads used only by settlers and Israeli military forces. (Al-Nahar, 4/4/1994)

The Israeli authorities began large-scale operations to level land that was sealed off last year in the Deir Gharbi and Bab al-Quds areas of Rantis in the district of Ramallah where two large bulldozers under military protection are constructing two roads. These roads, each of which will be 8 metres wide, lead respectively to the north and east of the settlement of "Ofarim". (Al-Quds, 14/4/1994)

II. Attacks on Arab citizens and their property

(a) Attacks on land

Jewish settlers and Israeli troops continued their attacks on Arab land and crops, which they bulldozed, uprooted, burnt or destroyed.

Reports received during the month indicated that Jewish settlers from the settlement of "Tekoa", which has been established on land belonging to the Arab village of Tuqu' in the district of Bethlehem, destroyed more than 180 olive trees belonging to residents of the village by poisoning them with toxic chemical substances. (Al-Nahar, 16/4/1994)

In the district of Jericho, Jewish settlers also uprooted dozens of banana trees and destroyed water pipelines on neighbouring Arab farms. (Al-Quds, 26/4/1994)

More than 1,000 trees were uprooted and destroyed during the month. These acts of aggression against Arab trees and crops are illustrated by the following:

13 fig trees uprooted at the village of Beit Lahiya. (Al-Quds, 2/4/1994)

100 olive trees uprooted on land belonging to the village of Qusra/Nablus. (Al-Quds, 9/4/1994)

15 olive trees uprooted on land belonging to the village of Far'un/Tulkarm. (Al-Quds, 9/4/1994)

500 olive and fig trees uprooted on land belonging to the village of Beit Liqya. (Al-Quds, 14/4/1994)

170 olive and almond trees uprooted on land belonging to the village of Deir Nidham/Ramallah. (Al-Quds, 17/4/1994)

Dozens of dunums of vineyards bulldozed in the area of Beit Lahiya/Gaza Strip. (Al-Nahar, 26/4/1994)

(b) Attacks on citizens

The Israeli army erected a gateway consisting of barrels of cement near the Shari'a Court at Nablus. (Al-Quds, 2/4/1994)

The Israeli authorities used barrels of cement to close four points of access to Anabta in the district of Tulkarm and erected a 6 metre-high wire fence along Nablus Road at Tulkarm. (Al-Quds, 6/4/1994)

The Israeli police arrested 38 Arab workers from the occupied territories on the ground that they did not hold permits to enter the district of Netanya. (Al-Quds, 8/4/1994)

Israeli troops raided and searched the home of a resident of Bir Zeit, damaged its contents and assaulted its occupants. (Al-Quds, 9/4/1994)

The Israeli authorities closed the Hamza mosque at Ramallah for three months without giving any reason. (Al-Nahar, 9/4/1994)

Large Israeli military units stormed the house of a resident of the town of Gaza, expelled its occupants and then searched it, broke its furniture, damaged all its contents and dug up the floor in several places on the pretext of searching for weapons. (Al-Quds, 12/4/1994)

Settlers from the settlement of "Itamar" near Nablus attacked the owners of olive groves to the east of Beit Furik with sharp instruments, pieces of pipe and stones and drove them away from the groves that they were ploughing. (Al-Quds, 15/4/1994)

An Israeli army unit raided and searched the offices of the Badr Press Services Agency. (Al-Quds, 19/4/1994)

Israeli police units arrested 40 Palestinian workers from the occupied territories who had crossed the "Green Line". Each of them was fined an amount of 400 shekels for not being in possession of an entry permit. (Al-Quds, 18/4/1994)

The Israeli authorities arrested 2,500 Palestinian workers inside Israel and expelled them to the occupied territories after imposing a fine of $130 on each of them. (Al-Quds, 20/4/1994)

Jewish settlers burnt two Palestinian-owned vehicles in the village of Beit Furik in the district of Nablus. (Al-Quds, 20/4/1994)

A large Israeli army detachment raided the village of Asira al-Shamaliya in the district of Nablus and searched three mosques. (Al-Quds, 22/4/1994)

Settlers attacked a Franciscan convent at the Aida refugee camp and desecrated the cemetery with graffiti. (Al-Quds, 22/4/1994)

The Israeli authorities closed the Rawdha mosque at Hebron for a period of six months. (Al-Quds, 28/4/1994)

III. Practices in violation of human rights in the occupied territories

1. Arrests

(a) Mass arrests

The Israeli authorities launched a campaign of mass arrests in the occupied territories in which they targeted persons whom they suspected of belonging to the Hamas movement. Palestinian sources estimated the number of persons arrested at about 2,700.

According to a special report issued by a Palestinian juristic institution, by 1 March the number of Palestinian security prisoners held in Israeli prisons and detention centres amounted to 11,315, of whom 3,860 were held in prisons run by the Prisons Service while 7,335 were incarcerated at military detention centres, particularly "Ansar 3" centre where 5,000 were being held, and a further 120 detainees were held at the Maskubeya interrogation centre.

Forty-two prisoners were being held in the isolation block at the Nitzan detention centre. Twenty-one sick prisoners were in the hospital at Ramleh prison and about 180 young male and female prisoners were being held at Tel Mond prison.

The report was prepared by the Mandela Prisoners' Welfare Organization, which obtained the statistics as a result of visits by its lawyers to prisons and detention centres and also from reports of the International Red Cross. (Al-Quds, 1/4/1994)

These mass arrests in the occupied territories during the month of April 1994 are illustrated by the following:

5 Palestinians arrested in the Gaza Strip. (Al-Nahar, 5/4/1994)

16 Palestinians arrested in the town of Hebron. (Al-Quds, 8/4/1994)

8 Palestinians arrested in the village of Ya'bad/Jenin. (Al-Quds, 14/4/1994)

20 persons arrested in various areas of the West Bank. (Al-Quds, 16/4/1994)

15 persons arrested in the Gaza Strip. (Al-Quds, 16/4/1994)

2,700 Palestinians arrested during the last two weeks of April on the charge of membership of the Hamas movement.

(b) Administrative detention

During the month, 200 of the Palestinian members of the Islamic resistance movement Hamas, who were detained during the recent campaign of mass arrests, were placed in administrative detention at the Negev prison for periods ranging from three to six months without being brought to trial.

(c) Sentences passed on Arab citizens

The Israeli authorities are still detaining 34 Palestinians who completed their sentences a long time ago. They have been placed in administrative detention, which is renewed automatically.

During the month, Israeli courts passed numerous sentences ranging from life imprisonment to lesser terms of imprisonment on residents of the occupied territories.

During the month, 120 Palestinians appeared before Israeli military courts in the occupied territories (as reported in additions of the Al-Quds newspaper from 2 April to 1 May 1994).

Four were sentenced to life imprisonment. An exorbitant fine amounting on average to 700 shekels was also imposed on each convicted person. The total of these fines was estimated at about 81,750 Israeli shekels, i.e. about US$ 32,700.

(d) Conditions of detention and ill-treatment of detainees

The question of the Palestinian detainees in Israeli prisons and detention centres is among the principal factors affecting the current peace process between the Israelis and Palestinians.

Whenever it is announced that an agreement has been reached concerning the release of the detainees on special conditions or in batches, the Palestinians are surprised to hear declarations by Israeli officials denying the existence of a comprehensive agreement. Although the Israeli authorities have released very limited numbers of detainees who have completed their sentences, they have simultaneously arrested a far higher number of others and they are attempting to undermine the unity of the Palestinian people by releasing only supporters of the peace process. In fact, they have declared their intention not to release persons who oppose it.

Conditions of detention are deteriorating and the detainees are appealing, through the information media, to local and international public opinion to intervene rapidly with a view to mitigating their constant sufferings or securing the release of some sick detainees whose lives are being endangered by the deplorable health conditions.

On the occasion of the Palestinian Prisoner's Day, which was commemorated on 17 April, some of the main questions raised concerning the detainees in Israeli prisons were as follows:

The state of health of the detainees: From the time when they enter the detention centres, the Palestinian detainees suffer from poor health care. The prison administrations fail to provide sick prisoners with any form of treatment and the prison medical officers supply them only with capsules of the sedative called "Acamol".

As a result, the detainees at Jenin Central Prison declared an open-ended boycott of treatment and visits to the prison medical officer until further notice in protest against the deplorable health conditions. According to a letter that the Red Crescent received from the prison, more than 50 detainees were suffering from various diseases such as diabetes and cardiac, kidney, liver and stomach complaints and some of them were in need of urgent surgical operations.

Malnutrition: The Palestinian detainees constantly suffer from the lack of variety and inadequate quantity of their meals. Some prison administrations do not permit the detainees to prepare their food themselves and show no regard for cleanliness and the unwholesome nature of the food that they provide.

Solitary confinement: For a long time, the administrations of the Israeli prisons have been pursuing a harsh punitive policy against the detainees. This policy consists in isolating the detainees in special cells for long periods of time in inhuman conditions in which the prisoner is totally cut off from the world. The conditions in these isolation cells are deplorable due to the lack of cleanliness, the leaking sewage pipes, the iron chains with which the detainees' legs are shackled whenever they are permitted to leave their cells for recreation periods, and the long intervals between family visits.

The detainees also suffer from numerous other collective punishments such as bans on the performance of Friday prayers or on chanting the call to prayer. Detainees are also transferred from the West Bank or Gaza Strip to places inside the "Green Line", which is incompatible with the provisions of international law and makes family visits difficult. The security cordon around the occupied territories constitutes an additional obstacle to family visits.

2. Demolition of houses

In the town of Ramallah, Israeli military forces demolished the house of Muhammad al-Wahidi on the pretext that "wanted persons" were being harboured therein. Although the owner of the house assured the Israeli forces assigned to carry out the demolition that there were no "wanted persons" in the house, they insisted on demolishing it with two heavy bulldozers. It is noteworthy that the house, which was built only a short time ago, was demolished against the background of the trial of Abir al-Wahidi, the owner's daughter, who was sentenced to 13 years' imprisonment.

3. Martyrs

The number of martyrs who were killed in April 1994 amounted to 15, two of whom died during a suicide operation while three were shot and killed by settlers and the others by the Israeli army. Six of them died in the

Gaza Strip and the nine others in the West Bank. The ages of the martyrs ranged from 11 to 35 years. This brings the total number of persons killed from the beginning of the intifada to the end of April 1994 to 1,687 male and female martyrs. The following lists gives the names of the persons killed during the month.

No.	Name	Age	Place of residence	Source of report
1.	Khalid Halabi	28	Khan Younis camp	Al-Quds, 3/4/1994
2.	Tamir Yasser Zeidan	16	Ramallah	Al-Quds, 6/4/1994
3.	Ra'id Muhammad Zakarneh	19	Qabatiya	Al-Quds, 7/4/1994
4.	Ali Talib al-Eimawi	21	Shati' camp	Al-Quds, 7/4/1994
5.	Fakhri Ibrahim Qasimiya	16	Bal'a	Al-Quds, 8/4/1994
6.	Atif Juma'a Ubaid	18	Gaza	Al-Quds, 10/4/1994
7.	Fatima Sami Abdullah	18	Al-Habib/ Jerusalem	Al-Quds, 13/4/1994
8.	Awadh Abdullah al-Handash	20	Ramallah	Al-Quds, 14/4/1994
9.	Ammar Salih Amarneh	22	Ya'bad/Jenin	Al-Quds, 14/4/1994
10.	Nahid Awda Amtir	19	Kalandia camp	Al-Quds, 17/4/1994
11.	Yaseen Mahmoud Hamad	22	Kalandia camp	Al-Quds, 21/4/1994
12.	Hassan Youssef al-Ghafir	19	Gaza	Al-Quds, 22/4/1994
13.	Shafiq Mahir al-Shawa	13	Gaza	Al-Quds, 24/4/1994
14.	Muhammad Tuman	18	Khan Younis	Al-Quds, 24/4/1994
15.	Kamil Hussein al-Wureidat	35	Dhahiriya	Al-Quds, 27/4/1994

4. Violations against educational institutions

Various types of violations were committed against schools and educational institutions in the occupied territories. In addition to repeated closures, Israeli troops committed a number of acts of aggression, as illustrated by the following:

Troops stormed the premises of Hebron University in which they fired shots, wounding two students. (Al-Quds, 6/4/1994)

Troops raided the Beni Zeid Secondary School at Deir Ghassana. (Al-Quds, 29/4/1994)

The authorities procrastinated on the issue of travel permits to residents of the Gaza Strip studying in the West Bank. The number of Gazan students enrolled at educational institutions in the West Bank amounts to about 1,300. (Al-Quds, 7/4/1994)

The names and locations of the schools against which closure orders were issued during the month are shown below, together with the duration of the closure.

Name of school	Location	Duration of closure
UNRWA Preparatory Schools for Boys	Tulkarm camp	Period of closure was extended
Al-Hajahija Secondary School for Girls	Tuqu'	-
Al-Hussein Secondary School for Boys	Hebron	Two weeks
Bethlehem Secondary School for Girls	Bethlehem	Until further notice
Beit Sahur Secondary School for Boys	Beit Sahur	Until further notice
Al-Manfaluti Secondary School for Boys	Deir al-Balah	Until further notice
Jalazcne School	Jalazone camp	Until further notice
Jalazone Girls' School	Jalazone camp	Until further notice